AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Trade Commission that my Administration requested on U.S.-African trade and investment flows and the potential for growth.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; William Roth, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; and Bill Archer, chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means.

Remarks at the Democratic Governors Association Dinner

February 5, 1996

Thank you. Thank you for that wonderful welcome. Governor Caperton, thank you for that wonderful introduction. When he started all that business about Jefferson and Truman, I turned around to the guy next to me, I said, ''Who's he introducing now?'' [*Laughter*] I'm very grateful to you for your friendship. Thank you, Governor Dean and Governor Carnahan, the immediate past chairman; and all of my fellow Governors; and my colleagues, former Governors who are here tonight; to all the officers of the DGA and those of you who work so hard for them, Mark Weiner, Katie Whelan, and the other members of the staff; and most of all to all of you who have come here to support them. I thank you for being here, and I thank you for your support for the Democratic Governors.

If tonight's dinner and its success is any indication, after the 1996 election, there will be more than 19 people standing up on this stage. And let me just say, while there will be a great deal of focus in this election year on the President's race, as there should be, there will be a great deal of focus in this election year on the races for Congress, as there should be. And I hope and believe we will make some real progress there.

Remember that no matter what happens, there is an inexorable move to push more basic jobs of the public back to the State level. And if that is so, it matters more than ever before who is the Governor of each and every American State. And I can tell you, given the responsibilities the Governors will have for the foreseeable future, it is more important than ever before that we elect good Democratic Governors to the statehouses all across this country.

It was so cold in Washington for these last 2 weeks, I had to have a break last weekend, so I went to New Hampshire. [*Laughter*] Well anyway, I got outside the Beltway. For those of you who live here, you'll be happy to know that I not only got a good dose of old-fashioned American values, I saw in action the fine art of snow removal, and I—[*Laughter*]

To be fair to the people here in Washington, DC, who have that responsibility, Washington is still viewed by many people as sort of a Southern city. I mean, we have a half inch snow, they close every school within 50 miles. [*Laughter*] And the kids like it, but it's not so great for the economy.

Let me tell you, I also saw some very encouraging signs in New Hampshire that have more to do with what I want to visit with you about tonight. When I went back to New Hampshire, a place where I made 75 scheduled appearances between January the 1st and February the 18th, 1992, and countless unscheduled ones, I was profoundly moved to see the number of people who would still come out to an event where you just tried to talk sense and deal with the real challenges before the American people, people who did not want a 30-second sound bite and were tired of negative ads.

We had an event in New Hampshire surrounding the administration's community policing initiative, showing what happens when people in a neighborhood that had been riddled by crime and drugs and gangs decided to take their streets back and had some help from community policemen who had a little office in the neighborhood and rode bicycles and knew the schoolchildren by their names. We saw people telling us that they could walk the streets at night again for the first time in years, and they didn't worry about the safety of their children anymore. And they knew that there was a connection between what we do in Washington and what happens on their streets, in their neighborhoods, and in the lives of their children.

We saw a great State school-to-work program where we got all these people together, and they understood that you didn't have to have a big Government program to have the National Government play a helping hand in bringing employers and schools together so that young people could understand that in the world we're living in there can no longer be an artificial division between the world of work and the world of learning and that they had to be brought together.

I visited a fine company that, among other things, makes some defense equipment we use on *Marine One,* my helicopter, and other aircraft in the United States military fleet, and works on civilian communications satellites, bringing young women into this business so that they would understand that engineering is not just a job for boys but girls could aspire to be engineers, as well.

I went to a school in Concord, New Hampshire, that is on the site of a church where in 1788 the delegates from New Hampshire became the decisive ninth State to ratify the Constitution of the United States and to make this one United States of America. And on that very spot, this school, which now has an overwhelmingly moderate- to low-income student body, an elementary school—an elementary school was, along with all the other school rooms in the city of Concord, hooked up to the Internet. They showed me how they were putting out a newspaper, these fifth and sixth graders; they were selling ads for the newspaper; they wrote the editorials and the news stories, that it was so popular they had converted it from a school newspaper to a community newspaper, and they were circulating it in the entire area of their city from which they had any students, and they now had gotten themselves a home page on the Web for their elementary newspaper. And I saw how businesspeople had loaned them or given them computer equipment so that even the poorest kids could take something home at night and work with their parents and show them what they were doing—partnerships, solving problems, meeting the demands of today and tomorrow.

I met with a lot of small-business people who 4 years ago when I was there couldn't get loans. And each and every one of them had been helped at least once by a Small Business Administration that in this Democratic administration has cut its budget by 40 percent and doubled its loan volume and increased its loans to women businesses by 80 percent, to minority business by two-thirds, and is the best SBA in the history of this country.

I say that because I found that the people there, as always, are conservative, prudent, discriminating, but more and more are interested in real conversations about how we're going to take advantage of these opportunities before us and how we're going to meet our challenges.

And they understand that the choice is not the one that we have been shoveled up in election after election after election. It's not some big argument about big Government versus small Government or the horrors of the Government against the joys of the market. The real choice is whether we are going to meet our challenges together or go back to a time when everybody was left to fend for himself or herself.

I would remind you that the whole reason the American people started to live together in communities is because they knew they could do things together they could never do alone. Whenever we work as a team as a country, we do well. This country has never, ever been defeated by any problem abroad or within when we work together. Our only defeats come when we permit ourselves to be divided—when we permit ourselves to be divided. Therefore, we must reject any political message that says, vote for me because I'll make you so miserable you will be divided; you will put me in, but I will divide your country. We must say no to that.

After 3 years of working here for you and the American people, doing everything I could every day, not only to help advance the cause of our country and its people but also trying to come to grips with the phenomenal changes that are going on in American life, that is the single, simple lesson I bring to you tonight, that you can determine—every single thing we have done is to help the American people make the most of their own lives and work together to solve their problems. That is the great issue of the present day.

This is, to be sure, as I said in the State of the Union, a great age of possibility. Most of us have benefited from it. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to afford to be here tonight. And it is literally true that there has never been a time in the history of our country or the world when there were so many different opportunities for so many different kinds of people to live out their own dreams and to bring their God-given capabilities to fruition. And that is the great joy of this time.

It is also true that, as with any time of great change, there is a lot of uprooting, a lot of upheaval, a lot of uncertainty. There is increasing inequality in income. There is stagnation of wages for those who are not able to take advantage of the age of possibility. There is greater insecurity among millions of working people. And it exists side by side with the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years, highest homeownership in 15 years, an all-time high in trade, an all-time high in new business formation, an all-time high in each of the last 3 years in new, self-made millionaires, not people who inherited it but people who took advantage of the opportunities this country affords to make it.

And the great challenge we have today is to keep the good things going, to keep the dynamism of our country working in a way that will make us stronger, but to do it in a way that extends the American dream of opportunity for all the American people and that pulls our country together. You can be proud of the work that Democrats did in Washington to cut this deficit in half in the last 3 years. I met with the Secretary of Agriculture today and, as I try to do from time to time to keep up with how things are going on the farm—and I won't bore you with all the details, and some of you, it may not mean much to you—but corn is at $3.60, wheat is at a 15-year high, and soy beans are at an 18-year high because we have opened new markets for American agriculture all over the world. You can be proud of that kind of thing.

You can be proud of the fact that we have almost 8 million new jobs, and a million of them in automobiles and construction alone. You can be proud of the fact that your country has been able to be a leading force in the world for peace and freedom and democracy, from the Middle East to Haiti to Northern Ireland to Bosnia. You can be proud of the fact that the welfare rolls, the food stamp rolls, the poverty rolls, the teen pregnancy rolls, they're all down. You can be proud of that. The crime rate is down. You can be proud of that.

But you also must know that because of the way work is changing so that more and more work is dependent upon information and technology and knowledge, and not just what you know but your ability to continue to learn throughout a lifetime, because the nature of the workplace is changing as productivity gains that are unimaginable permit large, centralized bureaucracies and almost mandate them to slim down so that more and more jobs are being created in smaller units and bigger units are doing more with fewer and fewer people. And the nature of the markets are changing, the financial markets and the world markets for goods and services. All these things have caused the upheavals that have caused the anxiety that many American working families feel to exist right alongside of all this good news.

As Democrats we know in our bones that what makes this country great is our ability to hold out the promise of opportunity for everyone who is willing to work for it. And it is our understanding that when we all do well together, each of us individually does better than we otherwise would do; to understand that it is important to support families and childrearing, but that when all of our families do better it helps our family to be stronger.

And so I say again, the central question facing us is no longer big Government or small Government. There is no more big Government. This Government's the smallest it's been since 1965, and by the end of this year, it will be the smallest since the Kennedy administration.

And it cannot be that Government is bad and the market is good because we see now from what's happening to so many of our fellow Americans that the market is a wonderful thing, but it certainly doesn't solve all problems, and it creates some as it changes. We know that as well.

So what we have to do is to ask ourselves, what is it that we are going to do as Demo-

crats? To stand for the proposition that we believe in work and family and the future, we believe in opportunity and responsibility, and we know we have to do it as one community. That is what I tried to address in the State of the Union. That is the challenge I leave you tonight.

We clearly have to follow policies that will strengthen our families and raise our children better. We clearly have to do something to address this gnawing economic security. And we must begin by dealing with the conditions of changed work. We have to give people access to a lifetime of education, immediately when they need it. We have to make sure that everybody can afford to buy health insurance, and they don't lose it when they change jobs or when someone in the family gets sick. We have to make sure that people can get a pension, and they can carry it around with them if they're going to change jobs five or six times.

We have to make sure that working families have access to decent health care so they can succeed at work and at home. And if we want to, by the way, reform the welfare system, we have to make sure that we're going to have people succeed as independent workers and good parents. You can't be forced to make a choice in this country. If we have to choose between being good workers or good parents, the country will lose either way. It has to be both. And we can only solve this together.

For all the progress we've made in bringing the crime rate down—I talked to the mayor of my capital city and Governor Tucker's capital city the other day, and he was saying they had the lowest crime rate in 8 years there, and it was dropping like a rock because of community policing. For all of that, you and I know that this is still a country with inexcusable and unacceptable levels of crime and violence. And a big part of people's insecurity is the feeling that they are not free as Americans if they can't walk the streets, if they worry about their children, if they worry about their security in their homes.

And I tell you, the Democratic Party must be on the cutting edge of this until we reach our real goal. And our real goal should be to return to the time when crime is the exception, not the rule. That should be the goal in the United States.

The other great domestic challenge we face is to finally break this idea which still has too much of a hold on people here in Washington, that the only way we can grow the economy is to sacrifice the environment. The truth is, if you look at all the information, from brownfields in our inner cities, to cryptosporidium in the water supply of some of our cities, to the problems we had with *E. coli* in the Pacific Northwest, to what everybody knows global warming is doing now, which is making our winters worse, as well as our temperature hotter in the summer. We cannot sustain a strong and growing economy unless we find a way to do it while enhancing the quality of the environment, and the Democrats ought to take the lead in promoting that idea.

And finally, let me say I know that it isn't particularly popular to say, particularly at a time when people have so many of their own problems, but the United States must not withdraw from its world leadership. We must continue to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom, for democracy and prosperity.

The Secretary of Commerce is sitting out there. I don't want to embarrass him, but he is the finest Secretary of Commerce in my lifetime. But he would be the first to tell you that he could not take these trips and sell America's products and sell America's services and get investments for America all around the world if we were not perceived as being willing to lead the cause for peace and freedom; if we were not also working to continue to dismantle the nuclear threat until it doesn't exist anymore; to work with countries to end the threat of biological and chemical warfare; to work with countries to end the terrible scourge of these god-awful landmines that are in the millions in the ground, not just in Bosnia but Angola, in Cambodia, and throughout the world. We have to do that.

You may think it shouldn't be that way, but that is the way it is. Maybe there will come a time in the next few years when regional associations of freedom-loving people will be able to solve all their problems, and we'll just have to carry our own little bit of

the load. But for now, people look to the United States.

And if you believe that it matters, then I ask you to understand that we have to make difficult decisions still, and we have to invest some money still in our leadership for these causes. Our economic strategy is working in part because it is going hand in glove with our commitment to peace and freedom and democracy. And we cannot afford to walk away.

And finally, let me say, all of these challenges to be met will require us to generate a higher level of trust and confidence and common sense and civility among our people as they relate to each other and to our governments.

So I end where I began. That's why it's so important who the Governors are. It's why it's so important what is done. We have shrunk the size of Government. We are getting rid of 16,000 of the 18,000 pages of regulations. We have done all that downsizing, and we will do some more.

More importantly, we have dramatically increased child support collections, and we've cut the default rate in student loans. And as I said, we doubled the SBA loan volume. And I could give you a lot of other examples. But in the end, our ability to succeed consists in our ability to readjust the responsibilities of the National Government with the States, with the localities, with the private sector, with individuals, and to build a new partnership for a new era.

Part of that is some changes we still have to make here, like campaign finance reform and the line-item veto, which I'm sure this Congress will eventually give me. [*Laughter*] But a big part of it is learning to work together in a way that is affirmative, is positive, that lifts people up.

You know, when I go to other countries, if they're conversant with American politics, very often leaders of other countries will say to me, "I frankly don't understand why people in America could be so negative feeling. Your unemployment rate is lower than ours. Your growth rate is higher. You have the lowest deficit in the world of any advanced country. All the rest of us look up to you."

Well, we have to pierce that cynicism, because cynicism in the end is a lousy excuse for inaction. It's a lousy justification for failure. It's a lousy explanation for disappointment in life. And I am convinced that if we Democrats go out there in 1996 with a commonsense, compassionate, intense commitment to the family, to the work, to the future of America, to the idea that the Government can play a role as a partner in creating more opportunity, and people have to assume more responsibility, and to an uncompromising position that we must do this together—we have no intention of going back to the time when people were left to fend for themselves, because we believe the age of possibility is for all Americans—I believe that our efforts will be rewarded. They must be rewarded in the President's race and the races for Congress and in the races for the statehouses.

By being here tonight, you have shown that you believe this. My challenge to you is that it's a long time between now and November. Don't quit now. Go out and preach this message and make sure it's clear what we stand for and what we're trying to do.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia, chair, Gov. Howard Dean of Vermont, vice chair, Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri, former chair, Mark Weiner, treasurer, and Katie Whelan, executive director, Democratic Governors Association; Gov. Jim Guy Tucker of Arkansas; and Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock, AR.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Conference

February 6, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you, Governor Thompson, Governor Miller, fellow Governors and friends. It is always good to be back here, and I very much appreciate what you said, Governor Thompson. I must say, I also enjoyed standing outside in the hall and listening to the last three or four speakers discuss the last resolution. It made me homesick and proud that I once was a member of this body.

Let me begin, Governor, by congratulating you on the work that you have done on Med-